AMATEUR RADIO NEWSLINE(tm) REPORT #1269 - DEC 7, 2001

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1269 with a release date of Friday, December 7, 2001 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T.

The FCC says no to a Winter Olympics special call sign and a new Extra class exam starts next summer. Learn what's in it on Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1269 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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THE 2002 WINTER OLYMPICS: FCC SAYS NO TO SPECIAL CALL SIGN

An idea for a special events call sign to celebrate the 2002 Winter Olympics has drawn a negative response from the FCC. Tom Schaefer, NY4I, of Sandy, Utah, had requested that the agency allow amateurs Utah hams to substitute the number 2002 or 02 for the 7 in their callsign. This, for the time period preceding and up to though the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. But after mulling it over for a few months the Schaefer says the agency responded with a definite no:

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Schaefer Here:
In-Q: I wrote a letter...
Out-Q:...as a different prefix.

The letter to Schaefer was signed by D'wana R. Terry. Terry is Chief of the Public Safety and Private Wireless Division of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau. Among the reasons Terry stated in refusing the special call sign request was that the block of special event callsigns requested did not fall into the commission's special event callsign format. Also, that the request was inconsistent with International Radio Regulations. Schaefer says that he is disappointed at the FCC decision to deny, and also a bit surprised:

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Schaefer Here
In-Q: The letter I...
Out-Q:...unable to do that.

Does this mean that there will be no ham radio involvement in the 2002 Winter Olympic Games? Not by a long shot. According to Schaefer members of the local ARES groups will be assisting in providing communications for the event. And there's a good chance that someone will pick up the ball and get some sort of special call sign using the established call sign administrator program.

By the way, you can hear more with Tom Schaefer NY4I about ham radio at the Winter Olympics on this weeks RAIN Report. Its on the web in Real Audio and Windows Media at www.rainreport.com and by telephone at 847-827-7246. That's 847-827-RAIN. (ARNewsline(tm))

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THE ARCTIC WINTER GAMES

Another event called the Arctic Winter Games are also in their planning stages. In this case, ham radio is an important part of the event. Q-New Graham Kemp, VK4BB, tells us the who, the what and the where:

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Greenland and the call-sign OX1AWG is on the air from Nuuk Greenland as a participant of the Arctic Winter Games going to be held in Iqaluit Nunavit and Nuuk Greenland 17th - 23rd of March 2002.

OX3HX, Rene tells us any Hams bringing a valid License original will be welcome to use the local club station OX3NUK for a small fee. If you would like to have your own OX3-call, ship a copy of the license but they need to have the papers 3 weeks in advance. Hams who like to operate OX/Home call or OX1AWG are welcome too, and have only to show up with original valid license.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, Im Graham Kemp, VK4BB, of Q-News Australia.
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For those planning to visit Greenland for the games, Rene Witkowsky, OX3HX will be available at one of the many Help Booths around the city. (Q-News)

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DX RECORD: 73 KHZ DISTANCE RECORD INCREASED

Yet another new low frequency record has been achieved on the 73 kHz band. Jeramy Boot, G4NJH, has more:

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“On the 21st of November, just before midnight UTC, W1TAG received extremely slow CW from G3AQC. This was the first time that a complete callsign had been copied, though partial calls were identified the previous night.

The opening lasted around two hours and was the culmination of several weeks of testing. At a distance of 5291 kilometers, G3AQC smashed his own record of 4408 kilometers when his 73kHz transmissions were received by VE1ZJ last June. He was running 200 milliwatts ERP.

The transmission was in Differential Frequency CW, where the dots and dashes are the same length but on slightly different frequencies, and with no space between them.

Jeramy Boot, G4NJH”
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The Differential Frequency C-W communications system used for this contact holds the promise of extending this record even further. (GB2RS)

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BREAK 1

This is ham radio news coming to you from the United States of America. We are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on great bulletin stations around the world this week honoring the Antelope Valley Amateur Radio Club Wednesday Night Net serving Lancaster California.

(5 sec pause here)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: EXPEDITION 4 HEADS TO THE ISS

Amateur Radio is keeping an eye one space this week. On the International Space Station to be more exact, as we witness a changing if the guard. The third group of Astronauts and Cosmonauts headed by Frank Culbertson, is getting ready to come home. They'll be back on Earth December 16th, after being in orbit since last August.

Expedition 4, Yuri Orufrienko, Dan Bursch and Carl Walz will take over and be up there until next May. Onufrienko once operated from the Mir Space Station; Bursch is KD5PNU and Walz is KC5TIE. So hams can look forward to contacts with them.

Amateur Radio on the International Space Station; ARISS; will continue on the air with two meter voice and packet. Voice contacts with schools all over the world have been well served and those exciting contacts will continue at a rate of one or two a week once the new crew settles in.

In addition to operating ham gear, the new crew has also carried new Amateur Radio antennas to the station. They were designed and built in Italy to Russian specifications, then space-qualified and shipped to the United States.

The Astronauts plan at least eight space walks, two of which will be used to install those antennas outside the crew quarters. They should provide a wide range of frequencies and vastly improved coverage of the ham bands for the ARISS station.

The space station call, while flying over the United States is NA1SS. The 2 meter downlink frequency is 145.80 MHz. Look for the new crew on the air from orbit in the near future. ARNewsline(tm))

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HAM RADIO TESTING IN THE USA: NEW EXTRA CLASS EXAM QUESTION POOL RELEASED

If you are planning to upgrade to Extra class, now might be the time to do it. This is because a new and somewhat more difficult Extra Class exam will go into effect next summer. Amateur Radio Newsline's Norm Seeley, KI7UP, has the details:

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The National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators Question Pool Committee has released a revised and expanded set of Element 4 Amateur Extra questions. Use of these questions begins next summer and replace the current Extra class question pool released back on April 15, 2000. That's the day Amateur Radio ''restructuring'' became effective.

The new Element 4 pool expands the number of questions by more than 20 percent. The new test pool has 806 questions as opposed to 665 in the current Extra class pool. It also contains more technical material. In fact, more than half of the questions cover electrical principles, circuits, signals and emissions.

The 50 questions in an Extra class examination are drawn from the question pool. FCC rules say that an applicant must correctly answer at least 37 questions of the 50 to receive a passing grade.

The new Extra class question pool becomes effective July 1, 2002, and must be used to generate all Extra class written examinations administered on or after that date. The questions are available on the ARRL Web site and will remain valid through June 30, 2005.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Norm Seeley, KI7UP.
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The Question Pool Committee now will turn its attention to developing an outline for the Technician class Element 2 question pool. A draft version is scheduled for public release and
comment next spring. The ARRL website address is
http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/pools.html to find the Question Pool. (ARRL Bulletin, NCVEC)

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HAM RADIO TESTING IN THE U-K: UPGRADING MORSE TESTS UNDERWAY

Meantime overseas, the United Kingdom is in the process of administering a lot of slow speed Morse code exams. This, following the an announcement by that nations telecommunications agency that U-K Full and Intermediate Class B license-holders can operate on the High Frequency bands under the new Foundation license by simply passing a code test.

Called a Morse Assessment exam, the Radio Society of Great Britain is arranging for sessions to be held nation-wide. The RSGB hopes that at least two sessions per region will take place between now and the end of December.

The RSGB says that these tests are open to both members and non-members of the society. So far twelve sites have been approved for training and testing of the new U-K Foundation License. (GB2RS)

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ENFORCEMENT: AMATEUR RADIO ROAD RAGE MUST STOP

The FCC's chief ham radio rules enforcer has told those attending the Ft. Wayne Indiana Hamfest that the time for on the air arguments has come to an end. Riley Hollingsworth, the FCC's Special Counsel for Amateur Radio enforcement told the forum that Amateur Radio road rage must stop now and that the bickering on our frequencies can do nothing but hurt Amateur Radio in the long run.

Hollingsworth also says its time for more hams to get involved in public service. Jack Parker, W8ISH, of Amateur News Weekly, has that part of the story:

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“Hollingsworth says that it is now time for hams to use frequencies responsibly. He adds that now, more than ever, is the best time for all Amateur Radio groups to seek out and establish working relationships with local emergency response agencies.

Since September 11th, Amateur Radio and its potential has moved into a prominent position on the national front. But he stresses that we must move quickly at a local level to establish our place in the overall emergency response plan.

Reporting from the Ft. Wayne Hamfest, for amateur News Weekly, I’m Jack Parker, W8ISH.”
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Hollingsworth’s views are echoed by many who are already involved in organizing ham radio emergency communications on a local level. They say you can never have to many well trained volunteers. (Amateur News Weekly)

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SPECTRUM USE: FCC OPENS UP MORE SPECTRUM TO COMMERCIAL USERS

The government has moved to eliminate a cap on how much spectrum any one wireless company can own in a given market. The decision opens the way for mergers between major carriers and allows them to provide more mobile services such as high-speed Internet access.

The Federal Communications Commission had previously limited the amount of spectrum that an operator could own in a particular geographic area, in an effort to prevent a single giant company from squelching competition in that market. But in a recent 3 to 1 vote, the agency decided to immediately raise the amount of bandspace a company can own from 45 MHz to 55 MHz. This is an increase of more than 20 percent. The FCC plans to completely eliminate the limit in January 2003. (FCC)

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HAMVENTION 2002: TIME TO NOMINATE REMINDER

Another reminder that the Dayton Amateur Radio Association has opened the nominating period for the 2002 Dayton Hamvention Awards. There are three awards presented each year. They are the Radio Amateur of the Year, Special Achievement, and Technical Excellence.

All amateurs Novice through Extra are eligible. Awards are decided by the Awards Committee, based partially upon the information received. Magazine articles, newsletters, newspaper clippings, videos and the like are appreciated but cannot be returned. The deadline for nominations is January 31, 2002. Nominations can be submitted by US Mail to Post Office Box 964, Dayton Ohio 45401 or by completing the convenient e-form on the web at www.hamvention.org. (DARA)

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NEW HAM TECHNOLOGY: THE ELECRAFT RIG CONCEPT DESIGN CONTEST

Want to design the ham rig of the future and maybe win a prize? Well, Elecraft says that it will be giving three of its new EC1 project enclosures to those who submit the most interesting suggested designs concepts.
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Eric Swartz WA6HQQ: “There’s quite a strong building and homebrewing community inside of the QRP’ers -- the low power operators -- these days. In fact, that is how we got our start.

We have broadened our audience past that and have pulled a lot of hams from the mainstream higher power groups to it also, but those guys (the QRP operators - ed.) build an awful lot of stuff. We are continually seeing folks talking about new project ideas and new things to design. It is quite a fertile group of people so I think we are just kind of servicing that need.”
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Elecraft says its taking this rather unusual step to away to help stimulate the creative process within the ham radio community. According to Elecraft’s Wayne Burdick, N6KR and Eric Swartz, WA6HHQ, design concepts submitted can be for virtually any ham-related application, but they must be compatible with the Elecraft EC1 enclosure. The EC1 is the same size and color as the K1 transceiver. No schematics are required and designers are under no obligation or expectation to actually build the proposed projects. More information on this unique design contest along with all the rules is on the web at www.elecraft.com. (Elecraft)

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ELECTRONIC BUSINESS: AILING POLOROID FILES CHAPTER 11

Polaroid has been known to generations of consumers for its instant cameras and film, and more recently as a supplier of digital imaging products. Now Poloroid has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

According to news reports, the company was unable to keep up with the new digital technologies of the photography world. It also has struggled with nearly $1 billion in debt. (Published reports)

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BREAK 2

News never goes home for the holidays and neither do we. We are the amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world at our only official website - www.arnewsline.org.

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EMERGING TECHNOLOGY: BRAIN DISEASE SUPERCOMPUTER

The University of California at San Diego will coordinate a consortium of interests banding together to build the first nationwide computer network for studying diseases of the brain. The network will enable researchers to share information on neurological diseases such as multiple sclerosis, schizophrenia, Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease. The National Center for Research

Resources, part of the National Institutes of Health, awarded the consortium more than $20 million for the project, which will enable researchers to share brain images via a high-speed network. (UCSD release)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: FREE UPDATED TRACKING SOFTWARE

An updated version of the PREDICT satellite tracking and orbital prediction program is now available. This latest updated corrects some errors that have caused instability under certain conditions in the past. The program's documentation has also been updated, and new versions in Portable Document File and HTML have been added. PREDICT is free software.

The latest DOS version may be downloaded from ftp://ftp.amsat.org/amsat/software/PC/tracking/predict2.zip >. Further information on PREDICT software is available at http://www.qsl.net/kd2bd/predict.html.

Also, new Linux version is currently being prepared for release as well. (KD2BD)

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INTERNATIONAL - SOUTH AFRICA: NO HT'S IN THIS CAR

Radio Amateurs in South Africa can no longer use a hand held radio in a vehicle unless its attached to a hands free operating system. This is the result of a new law that says that no person will drive a vehicle on a public road while holding a cellular telephone or any other communications device in one or both hands.

To operate mobile, hams and non hams alike now must use a radio permanently mounted in the vehicle and adapted to hands free operation. The law permits mobile radio operators to use such devices as a permanently mounted microphone and speaker or other specialized gear to comply. (SARL, Q-News)

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INTERNATIONAL-UK: MARCONI 100TH ANNIVERSARY

The 100th anniversary of the reception of the first trans-Atlantic radio signal by Guilermo Marconi at Signal Hill in St. John's, Newfoundland, takes place on Wednesday the December 12th. In celebration, a number of United Kingdom special event stations will be active to commemorate the event.

Most of the operations will take place on the 12th of December itself. Even Great Britain's Radiocommunications Agency is getting into the act. It will be operating GB100WT from its laboratory site at Whyteleafe, Surrey, during part of December including, they hope, the full 24 hours of the 12th of December. The Radiocommunications Agency expects to be operational on the High Frequency bands as well as 2 meters and 70 centimeters. The station will be operated by Radiocommunications Agency staff in addition to members of local radio clubs and will welcome QSOs with stations worldwide. (RSGB)

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RADIOSPORTS: WRTC-2002 REMINDER AND UPDATE

A reminder that the next World Team Radiosport Championship will take place next July in Finland. The games will be hosted by the Finnish Amateur Radio Society and the Contest Club of Finland. WRTC brings together over fifty two man teams made up of the best contest operators from around the world. The actual on-the-air competition pits two man teams operating from a common geographic area using identical equipment, power and antennas.

To get a good idea of what goes on at the World Radiosport Team Championship games, film-maker Dave Bell has produced a half hour documentary video titled "The Ham Radio Olympics." Its priced at only $19.95 and is available on video CD or VHS tape from the American Radio Relay League. More information is on the web at www.arrl.org. (WRTC, ARRL, W6AQ)

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DX

In D-X, word that wore torn Afghanistan is back on the air following the ouster of Taliban forces from most of that nation. Q-News Graham Kemp, VK4BB, is back with the details:
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Graham Kemp VK4BB:

"World traveller Peter Casier, ON6TT (5X1T), has been in Afghanistan for the last few days and has now obtained permission to operate in this worn torn nation.

On November 21 he was QRV as YA/ON6TT/M operating in a convoy. The foreign ministry of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (Northern Alliance) issued the call YA5T, which can be used on all bands by Peter, ON6TT, Matts, SM7PKK, and Robert, S53R.

Wayne Mills, N7NG, will have to look at the permission, once it is received. His initial reaction was that it should be good for DXCC. Peter will hopefully be contacting Wayne and submitting the documentation. Meantime, look out for these three operating as YA5T."
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And late word from the ARRL's DXCC Desk is that it has already received acceptable documentation for YA5T and has approved it for credit. (Q-News)

Several DX newsletters report that N6TJ is active as ZD8Z from Ascension Island again. He is expected to be there through the 18th of December. QSL as directed on the air. (OPDX, Modern DX'er)

Lastly, word that high seas have forced the Ducie Island DXpedition team to abandon its already-delayed effort to reach that DXCC entity located in the South Pacific. According to the RSGB, the team was some 80 nautical miles from its destination and facing high seas when the decision was taken to turn around and head back to Pitcairn Island. (GB2RS)

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THAT FINAL ITEM: STRANGE SCIENCE - FAT BIRDS FLY BETTER

About twice a year we bring you stories about radio tagged migratory birds. In most cases its those ever elusive Burrowing Owls. Now we have a totally different kind of bird story. It still involves radio tracking, but this time to see if bigger birds or smaller birds have a better chance to survive in flight. Amateur Radio Newsline's Joe Moell, KO0V has more:

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European scientists have discovered what seems like a contradiction about migrating birds. They found that the fatter the bird, the more efficiently it appears to fly.

Researchers at Lund University in Sweden have studied several small species including the Red Knot. In our hemisphere, these 20-ounce wading shorebirds travel 18,000 miles every year, to the tip of South America and back to the Arctic. On the way north, they stop on the shores of New Jersey to feast on the eggs of horseshoe crabs, to build up energy for the last 2000 miles of their northward trip, which they make non-stop. On these binges, the Red Knots can double their normal body weight.

Over the past few years a number of European Red Knots were radio tagged and tracked by the Swedes as they prepared for a similar trip between the British Isles and the Russian Arctic. The study indicates that building up of fat deposits to be burned as fuel during the migration is more than worth the energy that it takes to carry the additional weight. The heavier birds apparently use their muscles more efficiently. Just why this is so remains a mystery. Even stranger is that the results seem to 'fly in the face' of a central theory of aerodynamics -- no pun intended of course.

So what does this have to do with ham radio? Well, it points out that research always seems to yield unexpected results, and it gives me a chance to remind you that dozens of ham operators in western states are listening for the VHF radio tags on endangered Burrowing Owls this winter. You could help out too. Find out by visiting my Web site -- www.homingin.com. Who knows, maybe a ham will make a similar startling discovery about the migration habits of these unique critters. That's homingin -- one word -- for the Web site, homingin.com.

For Amateur Radio Newsline, in southern California, this is Joe Moell - K-zero-Oscar-Victor saying, "no jokes about birdbrains, please."
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All of this really goes to show that the more mankind uses science to discover the secrets of Mother Nature, the more amazed man is at what he learns. (Ecology Today)

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, Amateur News Weekly, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB and Australia's Q-News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline@arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio

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Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), P.O. Box 660937, Arcadia, California 91066.

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I'm Roy Neal, K6DUE, saying God Bless America, 73, and we thank you for listening." Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) is Copyright 2001. All rights reserved.